

## Healthy, Safe and Successful Missouri Adolescents

### Missouri State Framework for Promoting the Health of Adolescents

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Council for Adolescent and School Health (CASH) developed this framework to promote the importance of addressing the health needs of adolescents.

The **Vision** is that all Missouri adolescents will be healthy, safe and successful.

The **Purpose** of this framework is to guide decisions and actions to improve the health, safety and success of Missouri adolescents by increasing coordination, advocacy and support through state and local efforts.

To develop this framework, CASH consulted with national adolescent health experts, reviewed other state plans, and received input from state and community leaders, including Missouri youth.

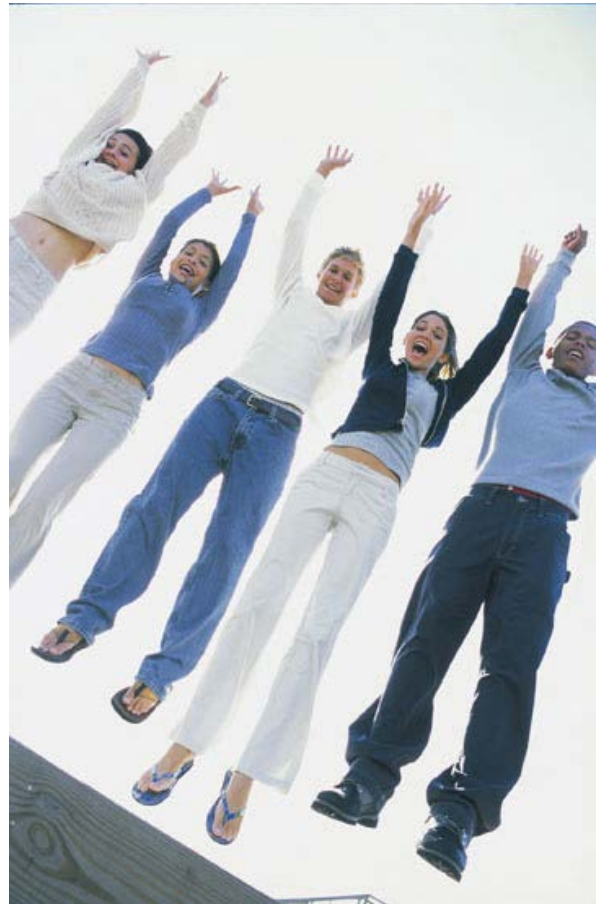
This framework is built on guiding principles that are relevant and applicable to any health issue that impacts the health of adolescents. An overarching value of this framework is that all adolescents are to be viewed as assets and not deficits or problems to be fixed.

This framework can be used to guide and develop adolescent health programming, policy development, and strategic planning efforts for:

- The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
- Other state agencies
- Communities
- CASH and other leadership organizations that serve youth and adolescents.

During the planning process for this framework, a new nationally acclaimed resource was published. The new resource, ***Improving the Health of Adolescents & Young Adults: A Guide for States and Communities (The Guide)***, was published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Adolescent and School Health (CDC/DASH) and the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau/Office of Adolescent Health (HRSA/MCHB/OAH) in conjunction with the National Adolescent Health Information Resource Center (NAHIC) and numerous national organizations.

The Guide was developed as part of the National Initiative to Improve Adolescent Health by the Year 2010. The initiative prioritizes adolescent and young adult specific health objectives that address mortality, unintentional injury, violence, mental health and substance abuse,



reproductive health, and prevention of chronic diseases. The Guide is designed to help state and local agencies and organizations build successful adolescent health programs.

The CASH advises that The Guide be promoted, disseminated and used as a science-based resource by state and local agencies and community-based organizations across the state.

To access an electronic copy of The Guide visit the CDC/DASH website at <http://nahic.ucsf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Complete2010Guide.pdf>

Information in The Guide supports CASH's five guiding recommendations in this framework. Key strategies to address the recommendations are proposed by CASH. Quotations from The Guide are cited for each of the recommendations. What some Missouri youth and young adults have said about the recommendations are also noted. The recommendations include:

Recommendation 1: Promote adolescents as valuable assets rather than problems.

Recommendation 2: Partner with adolescents to address the issues that affect their health.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen infrastructure and coordination of state and community resources that support adolescent health.

Recommendation 4: Build the capacity of communities (including families, schools, community and faith-based organizations) to support the health, safety and success of adolescents.

Recommendation 5: Promote developmentally appropriate physical and mental health services to meet the needs of adolescents.

## Recommendation 1

### Promote adolescents as valuable assets rather than problems.

#### The Guide states...

“Adolescence is a unique period in the life cycle that presents special challenges and opportunities to the individual. During the transition from childhood to adulthood, adolescents and young adults experience pivotal biological, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. In addition, they establish patterns of behaviors and make lifestyle choices that affect both their current and future health. By creating safe and nurturing environments for today’s youth—environments that **focus on young people’s assets** and minimize the chances for engaging in health risk behaviors—we can help ensure that tomorrow’s adults will be healthy and productive.”

“Many community programs offer asset-building opportunities for young people. . . . Such programs include mentoring, family education and support, extracurricular activities in schools, programs offered by clubs and congregations, and volunteer and employment initiatives. Asset-building programs can foster self-esteem, positive identity and pride among young people. They can also promote a commitment to education and promote values that help young people become productive members of society.”

#### Key Strategies

1. Promote adolescent self-awareness and understanding of their assets.
2. Develop and promote best practices and evidence-based programs.
3. Collaborate with state, local and community stakeholders to develop and conduct a social marketing campaign to promote youth as assets.
4. Include adolescents in the decision-making process.
5. Promote parent/family awareness and understanding of a strength-based approach to parenting.



#### What some Missouri youth have to say...

*I never felt like an asset.*

*Adults need to show empathy toward youth and be open-minded, LISTEN!*

*Don’t pretend that you know what we are going through.*

*Promote adolescents through businesses and corporations.*

*Have youth organize fundraisers that see the money coming back to their own communities.*

*Promote activities involving both adolescents and the elderly.*

*Use data from programs that are successful to show how valuable adolescents can be to various programs.*

## Recommendation 2

### Partner with adolescents to address the issues that affect their health.

#### The Guide states...

Partnership with youth increases the effectiveness of actions because teens understand youth issues in ways that adults do not. Youth should and can be involved in meaningful roles in their communities.

“A youth development approach emphasizes providing opportunities for young people to participate in challenging and engaging activities that build their skills and competencies. Within a youth development framework, adolescents are seen as able to contribute to their community and participate in community decision-making. To recognize themselves as competent young adults and assets to their communities, young people need adult support and encouragement.”

“In a relatively short time, today’s adolescents will be adults who will share responsibilities for addressing critical issues facing the nation and its states and communities.”

#### Key Strategies

1. Identify and promote best practices and evidence-based programs and approaches that have been proven effective in involving youth and resulted in positive health and education outcomes.
2. Conduct formative research with adolescents and those who influence adolescents (through focus groups, surveys, key informative interviews with adolescents, families, peers, and youth-serving organizations) to increase understanding about adolescents.
3. Involve adolescent target population in developing programs and interventions by partnering with communities, schools, and state and local government.
4. Develop educational strategies and provide training for adults (parents, community leaders, agencies, educators) on how to effectively work with youth.
5. Develop leadership training for youth to participate in traditionally adult-oriented groups and projects.



#### What some Missouri youth have to say...

*Adults need to bridge the gap between youth and adults.*

*Don't be negative toward things adolescents want to do.*

*Adults should not always do what adolescents want them to do, but adolescents do not want to be immediately shut off.*

*Pick adults who are stable and consistent role models to educate adolescents.*

*Pair youth with public servants to allow them to see that they can make a difference together.*

## Recommendation 3

### **Strengthen infrastructure and coordination of state and community resources that support adolescent health.**



#### **The Guide states...**

“According to one estimate, federal and state governments annually spent \$33.5 billion (\$859 per adolescent) to address the effects of adolescent pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), mental disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, motor vehicle injuries, and unintentional injuries.”

“Government agencies—at the federal, state and local levels—play both direct and indirect roles in adolescent health by developing policies, implementing programs, and providing funding for research. Locally, such bodies and agencies as the city council, county commissioners, county departments of health, and school districts affect a community’s awareness and its willingness to address the health needs of adolescents.”

“Through effective collaboration, stakeholders also decrease the likelihood of duplicating or omitting services, of using resources inefficiently, and of failing to coordinate programs and services.”

#### **Key Strategies**

1. Identify what programs and services currently exist in all state agencies that support adolescent health and safety (i.e., data resources, infrastructure, assessments, inventory, etc.)
2. Establish a “snap shot” (baseline) of the “state of adolescent health” in Missouri.
3. Assess how state agencies are currently coordinating their efforts to address adolescent health issues.
4. Develop a “model” at the state level to assess state agencies about programs/services that address adolescent health. This model could be disseminated to communities for their use as an assessment tool. (Note: Several resources including the *System Capacity for Adolescent Health: Public Health Improvement Tool* are available to develop the model.)

#### **The key system capacity areas to support adolescent health programs and services**

1. *Commitment to adolescent health*
2. *Partnerships*
3. *Planning and evaluation*
4. *Policy and advocacy*
5. *Education and technical assistance*
6. *Surveillance and data systems*

Source: *System Capacity for Adolescent Health: Public Health Improvement Tool* collaboratively developed by the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs and the National Network of State Adolescent Health Coordinators,  
[www.amchp.org/syscap/index.php](http://www.amchp.org/syscap/index.php)



## Recommendation 4

### **Build the capacity of communities (including families, schools, community and faith-based organizations) to support the health, safety and success of adolescents.**

#### **The Guide states...**

“Addressing adolescent health from multiple levels and perspectives is essential and should be reflected in all stages of program development. The four interacting levels of influence on adolescents and young people that should be addressed include: (1) individual/family, (2) school/peer, (3) community, and (4) policy/society.”

“Parents and other family members, peers, schools, health care providers, community agencies that serve youth, faith-based organizations, media, postsecondary institutions, employers, law enforcement and government agencies all shape young people’s development. Each individual and institution can play an important role in creating environments that support healthy development and encourage adolescents to make healthy decisions. To help young people establish healthy lifestyles, however, we need greater collaboration and commitment among multiple stakeholders.”

#### **Key Strategies**

1. Disseminate information about resources and best practices to address adolescent health issues. (i.e., provide resources to educators and employers)
2. Promote and use the CDC/DASH publication, *Improving the Health of Adolescents & Young Adults: A Guide for States and Communities*. The Guide provides evidence-based information, helpful worksheets, strategies and resources for guiding a development of programs and interventions that address adolescent health issues. Sections of The Guide address:
  - Partnerships and coalition building
  - Needs and assets assessment, planning, and using data
  - Management and media relations
  - Evaluation
  - Funding
3. Provide training and technical assistance to schools, local public health agencies, various community-based organizations and coalitions that have identified adolescent health as a local priority.



#### **What some Missouri youth have to say...**

*Adolescents need places to hang out.*

*Some communities have closed places for kids to hang out because a few vandals have ruined them for many others.*

*Find out what most adolescents feel their priorities are.*

*Have family conversations on health issues and the pros and cons of doing something that can affect your health like smoking, drinking, and sex.*

*Encourage government officials to mention and address teen health issues during public forums.*

## Recommendation 5

### **Promote developmentally appropriate physical and mental health services to meet the needs of adolescents.**

#### **According to The Guide...**

There is a need to increase access to quality health care for adolescents, in areas including:

- Comprehensive general health;
- School health services;
- Oral health;
- Mental health and
- Substance abuse prevention and treatment.

“Despite the potential of clinical preventive services to improve adolescent health, research indicates that the delivery of these services lags well behind national recommendations. Barriers include financial constraints, with more than 15% of adolescents lacking health insurance; a lack of confidentiality or ambiguity regarding confidentiality, which may limit adolescents’ disclosure of potentially crucial information; limited physician-patient interaction time; and a lack of confidence among clinicians in their ability to counsel on adolescent health risk behaviors.”

#### **Key Strategies**

1. Provide adolescent medicine and health consultation services, training and education for youth-serving professionals.
  - Continue to support Adolescent Medicine and Health Consultation Services contract.
  - Incorporate developmentally appropriate curriculum education regarding adolescents into the education for health care professionals including:
    - Pre-service and in-service training;
    - Medical school, dental school, social work, public health, nutrition, psychology, divinity, law, etc.; and
    - Work with accreditation boards of these professions.



#### **What some Missouri youth have to say...**

*Social workers in schools are good resources for teens to talk to.*

*Depression is a big issue for teens.*

*Increase prevention care and availability of resources, especially in rural communities.*

*When a kid says I feel burned out or I feel tired, listen.*

*Educate youth about the benefits of healthcare.*

*Promote cheaper more useful healthcare providers.*

*Form alliances with businesses and corporations for support.*

2. Promote and educate the general public and health care professionals about the medical home concept for adolescents and youth.

**What is a medical home?** “A medical home is defined as primary care that is accessible, continuous, comprehensive, family centered, coordinated, compassionate and culturally effective.” It is “an approach to providing comprehensive primary care.”

*(Source: American Academy of Pediatrics at [www.medicalhomeinfor.org/index.html](http://www.medicalhomeinfor.org/index.html))*

3. Partner with adolescents in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of health services. Examples include youth participants on local school health advisory councils and on advisory committees for local public health agency programs.
4. Identify funding sources (such as grants, community-based organizations, foundations) for comprehensive health services for: insurance, transportation, case management and medical home initiatives and transitioning to adult medicine.
5. Promote initiatives that support adult and teen communication and partnerships and ensure that there is a caring adult or mentor in the teen’s life. Empower teens to partner with the adult to:
  - Identify a medical home;
  - Be a part of medical decision making; and
  - Encourage confidential services between primary care providers and adolescents.
6. Explore and promote the development of a Missouri Center for best practices in adolescent health.